



Official Publication of the  
West Allis Radio Amateur Club

# Hamtrix

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Volume 60, Issue 2 February, 2013

## FEBRUARY CLUB HAPPENINGS



### February Club meeting

February 12, 2013

*Note Feb. meeting will be held on  
first floor of church*

Program

CW Mobile

by Pat Hoppe WW9R

also

Q & A period for WIQP

Wisconsin QSO Party

**Join us for a pre-meeting dinner**

**at Johnny V's Classic Cafe**

**1650 S 84th St at 5:00pm**

WARAC 2-meter net

Every Wednesday at 8pm

MATC repeater 147.045 standard offset

127.3 Hz CTCSS

**Wisconsin QSO Party**

**March 10, 2013**

**[click here or see club webpage for more  
info](#)**

Congratulations to  
Howard WA9AXQ and Frank KA9FZR  
for passing their extra class exam  
in January

**NEW** club jackets and hats!  
Go to club Web site and click on  
The GOLD MEDAL IDEAS block  
**[For more info or click here](#)**



# *The President's Shack February 2013*

We've made it to February! And the ground hog has done his thing, but it still looks like winter to me.

Ground Hog day was also the day of the Minnesota QSO Party and, in spite of below-zero temperatures across most of Minnesota, there was lots of activity. About 15 hardy mobilers charged out into the cold and made their rounds. I sure hope it's warmer in Wisconsin on March 10.

The upcoming meeting will be our annual Wisconsin QSO Party meeting since the March meeting will be two days after the party on March 10. First of all, our main program will be a presentation on CW Mobile, by Pat Hoppe, WW9R. Mobile operation is a big part of state QSO parties and the bulk of the mobile activity is on CW. Why do mobiles use CW? How do you do CW from a vehicle? Pat will answer these questions and show us what it takes.

Our club is the sponsor of WIQP and proud of it! And one of the unique things about WIQP is that there's something for everyone from big-gun contesters to casual little pistols. So let's get everyone on the air. What do you need to be ready on March 10? Bring your questions to the meeting. If you need help, let us know. We'll have a help session at the meeting.

Also, as you've probably heard, a new version of the N3FJP logging program for WIQP has been released. We will have a demo, talk about how to upgrade and answer your questions.

We have several new club members! Please get to know them and, since some of them are new hams, they may be looking for help getting started in our hobby.

Have you paid your dues for 2013? If not, you need to "pay" a visit to our Treasurer, Howard.

Also don't forget our before-meeting dinner at Johnny V's Classic Café, 1650 S. 84th St. at 5:00PM. If we have at least ten attendees, we will be able to use their private room, located through the doors at the north end of the main dining room.

See you at the meeting! Bring a friend!  
Tom, K9BTQ

## **From the Editor**

It's February already! I think we are being given short months. That's the only way to explain where the time is going. I have been busy. As many of you know I passed my extra test at our swapfest. I had set passing it as a personal challenge. I admit it felt good to do it. HI HI. I wrote up an article on some of the tools I used that helped me pass. Howard WA9AXQ asked me how I had studied for it and had the same success as I did. Nothing magic just one of many ways to do it.

One reason to go for your extra that I was surprised at, is it allows you to operate in European countries with out any extra paper work. I hope to be able travel now that I am retired, that will be a plus. Any paperwork reduction is a plus in my eyes!

One of the interesting things I found studying for the extra was how much new stuff is going on in Ham Radio. As always Hams are into a lot of interesting and cutting edge electronics and in many cases software to support the electronics.

I haven't been operating much We have been busy with wedding preparation for a son and redecorating the house. It's surprising how busy I am.

Consider checking out the Wisconsin QSO party coming up in March. I haven't done any other contests but I do try that one.

see editor pg9

# **WARAC General Meeting Minutes January 8, 2013**

## **Introduction**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President, Tom Macon, K9BTQ. Overall meeting attendance was 20 with one visitor.

## **Program**

The evening's program, Swapfest Review, was given by Phil Gural, W9NAW, and everyone participated in the Elmering session.

## **Business**

Swapfest attendance was relatively flat compared to 2012. Yaesu and Kenwood did not respond to requests for vendor literature while Icom and MFJ provided material. The VE session tested 28 examinees. Frank Humpal, KA9FZR passed the Extra exam at the Swapfest.

The February meeting program will be Mobile CW operating by Pat Hoppe, WW9R.

Motion was made and accepted to approve the December meeting minutes as published in Hamtrix.

The logs for the 10 meter WARAC portion of the contest are due. See Chuck Dellis for log submission.

If you need a club name badge, please see Chuck Dellis, W9WLX.

## **Announcements**

The Wisconsin QSO Party is March 10, 2013, only 2 months away! The QSO Party email reflector is up and running. Sign up at [http://mail.warac.org/mailman/listinfo/wiqp-mail\\_warac.org](http://mail.warac.org/mailman/listinfo/wiqp-mail_warac.org). See the WARAC web page for complete instructions.

Howard Smith, WA9AXQ, met with Gold Medal Ideas during the Swapfest. Anyone who has an older foam WARAC hat is eligible to get \$2 off a new hat. Gold Medal Ideas will be at AES Superfest. Please give Howard a heads up if you want to take advantage of the offer.

Johnny V's is the place for the WARAC pre-meeting dinner. The dinner starts at 5:00 and everyone is encouraged to participate.

Reminder—the Wednesday night 2 meter net is at 8:00 pm on 147.045, + offset, PL 127.3. Join in!

Meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chuck Dellis, W9WLX  
Secretary WARAC

# **WARAC Board Meeting**

## **January 22, 2013**

Howard Smith called the meeting to order at 6:58 pm.

Present: Tom Macon, K9BTQ, Howard Smith, WA9AXQ, Chuck Dellis, W9WLX, Leroy Haas, KC9NST, Frank Humpal, KA9FZR, and Dave Schank, KA9WXN.

### **Swapfest**

The final Swapfest numbers are not available. Preliminary results are >900, similar to previous year. Phil will be checking on the PA system—it may be available next year for prize announcements.

### **2013 Budget**

The WARAC 2013 budget was discussed and finalized.

### **Wisconsin QSO Party**

The WARAC web site has been moved. The new host is providing an email reflector for the Wisconsin QSO Party. Approximately 40 hams have subscribed. WIQP logging program N3FJP has been update to version 2.0. There is a list of changes on the WARAC web site. It was suggested to make a donation to Scott Davis for the work done. Solicitation of opinions regarding the number of plaques awarded has been requested on the reflector.

### **Programs**

February: CW Mobile Operation.

March: Digital modes demo.

April: VoIP

### **Miscellaneous**

Chuck Dellis, W9WLX has received 10 entries for the WARAC portion of the 10 meter contest.

Recipients will be announced at the 2013 Awards Dinner.

Howard, WA9AXQ, is researching the requirements for donated equipment sales, ensuring WARAC remains legally compliant.

2010 & 2011 audits are under reconciliation.

A new banner is needed for the club table at hamfests. Suggestions were made for vendors and display methods.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chuck Dellis, W9WLX  
Secretary WARAC

## How I Studied for my Extra Exam.

Since both Howard WA9AXQ and I were able to pass our extra class license exams in January, I thought I would share how I studied for it. Howard used some of my techniques and was happy with the results.

The main thing we did was taking practice tests from the beginning of our studying. By doing this I had a good idea what I needed to study and if my studying was working. I ended up taking the test a couple times a day over a month. There are many programs that allow you to take the test. I used

<http://www.eham.net/exams/> on the Internet. It is also possible to get a program that will make up practice tests for you. I had one that came with my extra class ARRL study guide. The only problem was it didn't work on my Linux computer. So there are many options.

I found this method helped me when I took the test. A lot of the questions I remembered from the practice tests. For me that helped nullify the pre-test jitters.

Some other thoughts on taking the exams:

1. Ensure you are using the current question pool because they update them every 4 years or so. If you borrow someones study material ensure it is still valid.
2. The question pool is at least 10 times larger then the test (by FCC order). This can be intimidating but keep in mind that many questions are repeats only worded differently. If you understand one question you know others.
3. The web site <http://www.w9rh.org/testing.htm> has a list of what you need to bring to the test site. Having it all in order helped make the process run smoothly. For me this was one less stress factor.

I hope sharing this encourages some of you to upgrade or maybe get into the hobby. Remember the nice thing about Ham Radio is it can give you a lifetime of learning! You can keep learning and put that knowledge into practice.

73

Frank KA9FZR

### Icon IC-718 for sale

excess to my station  
very lite use  
DSP hand mike, Manual,  
Power cord included

Best Offer

contact **George AA9SR**  
at **AA9SR@ARRL.NET**



# WARAC 10 Meter Contest

By Chuck Dellis, W9WLX

Last call for your 10 Meter logs! The log submission for the ARRL 10 Meter contest is long past, but if you wish to submit the log to me for your participation in the WARAC competition, it will still be accepted. Logs have been received for:

AA9SR K9IAC W9JBE W9WLX WB9GZP K9BTQ KA9JCP W9NAW WA9AXQ WB9PUB

If there was a problem receiving your log or you still wish to submit, please let me know.

## Wisconsin QSO Party Sunday, March 10, 2013

By Tom Macon, K9BTQ

With the 2013 edition of our Party only a month away, preparations are in full swing. Here's what's happening.

No doubt you've already heard that we now have an Internet mailing list (a.k.a., email reflector) for WIQP. It's open to anyone interested in discussing the QSO Party, including plans for mobile and portable operating plans, ideas, suggestions or other banter about WIQP. So far, there are about 40 sign-ups. See *Join our Mailing List* on the [WIQP web page](#) for sign-up information. QSO parties are about working counties and we hope that all Wisconsin counties will be activated, either by mobiles passing through, portable stations, or by local hams. Northern counties are least likely to be active, so if you know or talk to hams up north, invite them to the party!

For more information on county activation, see [Activate All 72!](#) on the WIQP web page. The table there shows the number of fixed and mobile stations in each county based on 2011 data. That year, mobiles activated 56 counties while fixed stations activated only 42, so you can see that the mobiles are a big part of getting our Wisconsin counties on the air. Eight counties were not activated at all.

Information on Planned Mobile Routes for 2013 will be published on the web page in the next couple weeks and will be updated as more information comes in. Mobile route postings may be made on the WIQP reflector or on the [County Hunters](#) website, as in past years.

In January the popular N3FJP logging program for WIQP was updated with the release of version 2.0. As you may recall, there was a statement on the N3FJP website about changes in the contest rules that the program did not support. This statement is now gone. Changes include updating the Canadian province list, addition of our Beginner (Rookie) entry category, and updates to the Setup and Write Submission File screens. For a more complete list of changes, see <http://www.warac.org/wqp/n3fjp-changes.htm> on the WIQP web page.

Instructions on how to upgrade to N3FJP version 2.0 plus Operating Tips for setting up and using the program are also on the web page. Go to <http://www.warac.org/wqp/wqp.htm> and look for Logging Software.

*next page*

Another addition to the web page is tips on the use of the N1MM logger. Since this program handles many contests, it's a bit more difficult to make the proper setup selections. So please check out our [N1MM Tips](#) for WIQP if you'll be using the N1MM program.

We will want your log! Electronically (by email) if at all possible. But it doesn't matter how many Q's you make or if you have a handwritten log – we still want it. If you have questions or problems with your setup or log submission, please post your questions on the WIQP reflector or contact us at [wiqp@warac.org](mailto:wiqp@warac.org).

Please get on the air on March 10! It's only seven hours – 1:00pm to 8:00pm local time. WIQP has something for everybody, from hard-core contesters to casual “mom and pop” operation and everything in between. Do because you're a member of the sponsoring club, do it for a high score, or do it for fun but, by all means, do it!

## **Ring of Fire**

### **By Gary Sutcliffe, W9XT**

It was during the Wisconsin QSO party a few years back. I was really into that contest and won it four times in the 1990's. It is important to be able to jump back to 40 and 80 meters often to work the mobiles as they change counties.

This is the only contest I really use two radios. One is set for 80. The shunt fed tower has a motor driven capacitor to remotely tune from CW to phone on the 80M band. I forgot that it does not tune very high up into the phone band unless you move the shunt feed tap on the tower.

Of course most of the activity in this contest is high up in the band. It was just before the start and I got it to tune reasonably well, but it looked like something was arcing over whenever I drove it with more than 500W. Then I remembered that I could not run a KW in the upper part of the band as it was, so I just backed the power down to about 400 watts.

Meanwhile, my wife had gone to the store and was just coming back. She saw smoke and ran down to the basement shouting, "The yard is on fire!" I ran outside and there was a 25-foot ring of fire around the tower! I tried to get a hose out there but it was about 50 feet too far away. I told her to call 911 and a few minutes later four fire trucks and about 20 firefighters showed up to put it out. About 1 1/4 acres burned. We have about 14 acres and this part was just a grass field, so there was no real damage done except to some coax and PVC supports for the Beverage antennas.

We had an extremely dry spring that year and there had been quite a few grass fires in the area in the previous week. Usually we still have snow on the ground in early March so it would not have started a fire. Fortunately I was able to convince the fire department that it was an accident and not the result of illegal burning and I avoided paying a stiff fine. I have changed the area to have a stretch of gravel around the base of the tower to prevent grass from getting near the electrical parts.

Reprinted from The Black Hole, October 2003  
Society of Midwest Contesters

# Three Safety Rules for Tower Work

## AA4LR blog from 25jan09

For myself, I've adopted three rules in order to ensure the safe execution of all tower work. But, before I write about the rules, I first have to tell a sad story.

When I moved to my current QTH, there was a fellow ham nearby -- he lived less than a mile from me. Though he lived in the neighborhood near me, I never met him. I believe his name was Paul.

Paul had a modest tower and tribander, like me. At a hamfest in November, a fellow ham loaned him an MFJ antenna analyzer. Paul was quite eager to climb up and make some fine adjustments to his antennas. He asked his friend if he would come over, but it was a cool, slightly drizzly day, and his friend suggested he do it at another time. Paul couldn't wait.

So, he climbed the tower himself that day. When his wife and kids came home from shopping about three hours later, they found him at the base of the tower. Unfortunately, it was too late.

Near as anyone can figure, he tried to climb while holding the analyzer with one hand, so it wouldn't be damaged. Somewhere on the way up, he lost his grip with his other hand. Ironically, he had full safety harness, but with one hand occupied, it was too difficult to clip in to the tower.

Tower climbing is a dangerous business. I knew of Paul's accident when I built my tower, so, for myself, I made three rules:

1. Never Climb Alone.
2. Never Climb Except in Good Conditions.
3. Always Take All Safety Precautions.

I borrowed the first rule from SCUBA diving. SCUBA divers know never to dive alone. Tower climbers should never climb unless they have at least a ground crew. If nothing else, a ground person can call 911 should anything bad happen. I've taught my kids from an early age how to properly act as ground crew. If nothing else, if I should fall and be hanging from the safety lanyard, I know someone will call 911 and get the emergency crews out there. I wouldn't want to be hanging there for hours until someone notices.

The second rule is pretty broad. Good conditions include the weather. I refuse to climb in rain, snow, windy, dark, or really hot or really cold conditions. Good conditions also apply to the climber. Tower work is demanding, physically exhausting. I refuse to climb when I'm tired, under the weather, or just not mentally "with it".

The third rule should be common sense. I climb with a full safety harness. I have a fall arrest lanyard clipped into the D-ring on my back, and it is always clipped into the tower. When I'm moving the fall arrest, I have a short 3-ft rope lanyard from the D-ring to the tower. I also always use my positioning lanyard during the climb. It allows me to stop and rest at any level.

see tower pg 9

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**tower**

All these precautions slow me down. I have some friends who like to free climb to the top, then they belt in. That's their prerogative -- but it's not for me. I'd rather be slow and safe than fast and sorry.

So, there you have it. Enjoy your tower, plan your climb, execute your plan, and stay safe.

*editor comment* I would add when you're on the tower take your time, Think before you move. Ask what if questions. A safety strap wrapped around some part of you may cause injury by tightening or spinning you around. If you don't have the time to be safe you shouldn't be up there. One final thought save the alcohol for a job well done, not as part of the preparation for the job.

**editor**

Everyone seems to be interested in getting you in their log book, so they are willing to work with you and you don't have to be perfect. You can spend whatever time you have. Come join the fun!

73

Frank KA9FZR

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***See our Web Page or contact us  
for more information on***

- WARAC Memorial Scholarships
- Wisconsin QSO Party
- Midwinter Swapfest
- Worked all Wisconsin Counties Award
- Amateur Radio Classes

WARAC holds meetings on the second Tuesday of each month and board meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Meetings are held at 7:00 PM at:

**St Peter's Episcopal Church  
7929 W. Lincoln Avenue  
West Allis, WI**

Entry is off the alley at the rear of the church.  
A wheel chair ramp and chair-lift are available.